

March 12, 2004



National Science Foundation
Directorate for Biological Sciences
Office of Assistant Director

Developing Country Collaborations in Plant Genome Research (DCC-PGR)

Dear Colleague:

This letter is to call your attention to an opportunity that will support research collaboration between US scientists and scientists in developing countries as part of ongoing or new Plant Genome Research Program awards. The "Developing Country Collaborations in Plant Genome Research (DCC-PGR) is an addendum to the NSF Program Solicitation, NSF 04-510, Plant Genome Research Program (PGRP) (<http://www.nsf.gov/pubsys/ods/getpub.cfm?nsf04510>). The intent of DCC-PGR awards is to support collaborative research linking US researchers with partners from developing countries to solve problems of mutual interest in agriculture, energy and the environment, while placing US and international researchers at the center of a global network of scientific excellence.

The long-term goal of these collaborative research efforts is a greater and sustained engagement with developing countries in plant biotechnology research. In order to realize the full potential of biotechnology for the developing world, the technology must target crops grown locally in the developing countries and the traits that are most relevant to the local farmers and consumers. At the same time, proposals should meet the broad goals of the PGRP described in the current Program Solicitation. Of special interest are those research projects that build on prior PGRP investments and that tackle problems specific to crops grown in the developing world.

A request for supplemental funding should be made under an existing PGRP award.

Support can also be requested within a proposal for a new or renewal PGRP award. Proposed collaborative activities are encouraged that focus on research problems important to developing countries and that include scientist-to-scientist interactions potentially leading to long-term partnerships among participating laboratories. The exchange of ideas and people should be reciprocal and should be built on equal partnerships among U.S. scientists and scientists of developing nations. Examples of activities to be supported would include, but not be limited to: joint research projects; and long-term (1 year) or short-term (1-3 months) exchange visits that are reciprocal exchanges of investigators and students between the US and developing countries. Collaborations should be developed that bring complementary sets of expertise to bear on problems of importance to the participants from developing countries, and that meet their identified needs.

Funding: The DCC-PGR supplements will generally be for up to a total of \$100,000 for up to two years, although larger amounts and longer award durations will be considered if well justified. NSF funds may be used for:

- Travel expenses associated with the exchange visits
- Salaries for the developing country partners while they are at the US host laboratories

- Research-related expenses such as supplies that are necessary for the developing country partners' research in the US host laboratory
- Research-related expenses for the US partners to conduct research in the partner's home laboratory in developing countries

NSF funds may not be used to support research and training activities of the developing country scientists and students at their home institution. However, these are important activities and NSF encourages proposers to seek additional support for them from non-NSF sources.

Proposers are also encouraged to seek non-NSF sources for funds that would enable sustained research collaboration after the NSF support has ended.

Eligibility: All currently active PGRP awardees are eligible to apply for a supplement under this Dear Colleague Letter. Scientists at institutions from "Developing Countries" listed in the appendix are eligible to be partners with the PGRP Principle Investigators.

Assistance in identifying potential partner scientists and institutions in developing countries can be requested from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID.) USAID supports collaborative plant biotechnology research programs involving many developing countries partners, universities and other research institutions in the U.S., and the International Agricultural Research Centers sponsored by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR.) Contacts in these and related organizations may be helpful in developing research collaboration relevant to crop improvement and other activities seeking solutions to agricultural, energy and environmental problems in developing countries. For information, please contact:

Dr. Larry Beach, Biotechnology Advisor, Office of Environment and Science Policy, USAID, telephone: 202-712-4049, email: lbeach@usaid.gov

For some countries on the list, NSF program officers in the Office of International Science and Engineering (OISE) may have knowledge of researchers, institutions, or funding mechanisms that could be helpful to prospective PI's seeking to develop a research collaboration. For assistance, please contact:

Dr. Frances Li, Senior Staff Associate, Office of International Science and Engineering, NSF, telephone: (703) 292-8710, email: fli@nsf.gov

Proposal submission: Supplemental requests can be submitted at any time. Please allow 4 to 6 months for review. Investigators submitting new or renewal proposals for the FY2005 PGRP (<http://www.nsf.gov/pubsys/ods/getpub.cfm?nsf04510>) deadline (October 8, 2004) are encouraged to integrate this activity into the proposals.

Proposal preparation:

Preparation of a supplement proposal should follow the instructions given in this letter and the NSF Grant Proposal Guide (<http://www.nsf.gov/pubsys/ods/getpub.cfm?gpg>).

New or renewal proposals being submitted to the PGRP FY2005 competition and containing this activity should follow the guidelines described in NSF 04-510 (<http://www.nsf.gov/pubsys/ods/getpub.cfm?nsf04510>). Applicants are encouraged to develop DCC-PGR activities that are integrated into the overall research theme of the proposed PGRP project.

The description of DCC-PGR project activities should include the following information:

- **Summary of the research problem** Provide a succinct statement of the problem to be tackled and its relevance to agriculture, energy or the environment in the partner developing country or countries.
- **Relevance and justification** Provide a justification of the need for the proposed research from the perspectives of the developing country or countries and its relevance to the goals of the PGRP.
- **Research plan** Summarize the major goals of the work, the scientific and technical approaches to be used, and the expected outcomes. If applicable, the plan should include a detailed description of bioinformatics necessary for the project execution and dissemination of the results.
- **Nature of research collaboration** Describe collaborative arrangements including the roles for the developing country scientists. If applicable, provide information on the history of collaborative efforts between the proposed partners.
- **Qualifications of the research partners** Provide the CVs of all the US and developing country researchers named in the proposal.
- **Endorsement from the partner institution** Provide a letter of endorsement signed by a senior personnel from the home institution of the developing country partner.
- **Impact statement** Summarize the potential impacts of the research outcomes on agriculture, energy or the environment in the partner developing country or countries.
- **Responsibilities of principal investigators** PIs are responsible for obtaining any required visas for foreign travel and, through the U.S. host research institution or laboratories, for providing documentation in support of U.S. visas for foreign counterpart investigators. Information about obtaining visas for foreign visitors to the U.S. can be found at the following url: http://www.nsf.gov/home/int/int_travel.htm. PIs are also responsible for obtaining research permits and import/export documents, where necessary.

The award decision for supplement requests will be based on internal review by the Program Directors and availability of funds. Larger request may require external review.

Cognizant Program Officers:

Dr. Jane Silverthorne, Program Director, Division of Biological Infrastructure, telephone: (703) 292-8470, email: dbipgr@nsf.gov.

Dr. Robert L. Last, Program Director, Division of Biological Infrastructure, telephone: (703) 292-8470, email: dbipgr@nsf.gov.

Dr. Fedora Sutton, Program Director, Division of Biological Infrastructure, telephone: (703) 292-8470, email: dbipgr@nsf.gov.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact a Program Director for further guidance prior to submission of their proposal.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Clutter
Assistant Director

Appendix

-- AFGHANISTAN	-- MOZAMBIQUE
-- ANGOLA	-- NAMIBIA
-- ARMENIA	-- NEPAL
-- AZERBAIJAN	-- NICARAGUA
-- BANGLADESH	-- NIGERIA
-- BENIN	-- PAKISTAN
-- Bhutan	-- PANAMA
-- BOLIVIA	-- Papua New Guinea
-- BRAZIL	-- PARAGUAY
-- Burkina Faso	-- PERU
-- CAMBODIA	-- PHILIPPINES
-- Cameroon	-- RWANDA
-- Chad	-- SENEGAL
-- COLOMBIA	-- SIERRA LEONE
-- Congo, Republic of	-- SOUTH AFRICA
-- DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	-- SRI LANKA
-- EAST TIMOR	-- TAJIKISTAN
-- ECUADOR	-- TANZANIA
-- EGYPT	-- Thailand
-- EL SALVADOR	-- Togo
-- Equatorial Guinea	-- TURKMENISTAN
-- ERITREA	-- UGANDA
-- ETHIOPIA	-- UKRAINE
-- Fiji	-- UZBEKISTAN
-- Gambia, The	-- VIETNAM
-- GEORGIA	-- WEST BANK/GAZA
-- GHANA	-- YEMEN
-- GUATEMALA	-- ZAMBIA
-- GUINEA	
-- GUYANA	
-- HONDURAS	
-- INDIA	
-- INDONESIA	
-- IRAQ	
-- JAMAICA	
-- JORDAN	
-- KAZAKHSTAN	
-- KENYA	
-- KYRGYZSTAN	
-- LAOS	
-- LEBANON	
-- LIBERIA	
-- MADAGASCAR	
-- MALAWI	
-- MALI	
-- Mauritania	
-- MEXICO	
-- MONGOLIA	
-- MOROCCO	

Presence of a USAID mission (all caps)